

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-18, 32-34 and 53 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Claims 1, 18, and 53 have been amended as shown on pp. 2-6 of the Reply.

Applicants' representative acknowledges with appreciation the courtesies extended by the Examiner during the telephonic interview conducted on August 5, 2008. During the telephonic interview, amendments to claims 1, 18, and 53 that overcome the below rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) were discussed. More particularly, an agreement was reached between the Examiner and applicants' representative that the claims as amended herein recite novel features neither taught nor suggested by the cited references.

Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 1-7, 9-18, 32-34 and 53 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-7, 9-18, 32-34 and 53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maissel *et al.* (U.S. 6,637,029) in view of Herz *et al.* (U.S. 5,758,257). It is respectfully submitted that this rejection should be withdrawn for the following reasons. Maissel *et al.* and Herz *et al.*, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every element set forth in the subject claims.

As amended, independent claim 1 recites that a collaborative filtering system *automatically expands* a particular one of a plurality of time subintervals *to include at least one supplementary time subinterval* when a recommendation produced from the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals including a target time period is insufficient. The collaborative filtering system can infer content preferences of likely local user(s) that employ an information delivery system during the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals, and generate the recommendation specific to the inferred, likely local user(s) based upon such inferred content preferences and information from global users related to the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals. Accordingly, when the recommendation is insufficient, the collaborative filtering system can enhance the recommendation by automatically adding time subinterval(s) upon which to infer content preferences and generate the recommendation. As agreed upon with the Examiner, neither Maissel *et al.* nor Herz *et al.* teach or suggest such claimed aspects.

Maissel *et al.* relates to electronic program guides for television systems. (See col. 1, ll. 11-13). Program schedule information can be used to assist a television viewer in choosing a television program to watch, either at a current time or in the future. (See col. 11, ll. 11-13). Further, an intelligent agent can be used to store program characteristics in a viewer preference profile, which can include information obtained over a period of time. (See col. 12, ll. 23-30). The period of time can be a few minutes, a year, or an unlimited amount of time. (See col. 12, ll. 30-31; col. 12, ll. 41-45). The intelligent agent can employ the preference profile to customize an electronic program guide. (See col. 3, ll. 5-8). Thus, Maissel *et al.* relates to obtaining information over a given interval of time, and using the information from that given interval of time to customize the electronic program guide. However, Maissel *et al.* is silent with regards to considering whether a yielded recommendation is sufficient. Additionally, Maissel *et al.* is silent with regards to automatically expanding an amount of time utilized for inferring content preferences and/or generating recommendations by adding at least one supplementary time subinterval when the recommendation is deemed to be insufficient as claimed.

Further, Herz *et al.* fails to make up for the aforementioned deficiencies of Maissel *et al.* *vis a vis* independent claim 1 as amended. Herz *et al.* relates to scheduling receipt of desired movies and other forms of data from a network such as a cable television system. (See Abstract). Herz *et al.* describes creating one or more customer profiles for each customer of video programs, where the customer profiles indicate customer's preferences for predetermined characteristics of video programs and can vary in accordance with time of day, time of week, and/or customer mood. (See col. 4, ll. 59-64; col. 5, ll. 23-28). Different customer profiles can be used for each customer in accordance with the time of the day and of the week, thereby reflecting changes in the customer's preferences or moods during the course of a week. (See col. 5, ll. 29-33). Moreover, each mood has a time window within which the mood is effective, where the time window has a starting point and an ending point. (See col. 17, ll. 33-41). Further, the customer can be responsible for defining the moods. (See col. 17, ll. 66-67). Based upon the customer profiles, an agreement matrix can be generated that enables the system to determine a subset of available programs at a particular point in time which is most desirable for viewing by the customer. (See col. 5, ll. 4-8). Thus, Herz *et al.* relates to determining desirable programs for a customer at a point in time based upon customer profiles with preset times within which they are effective without considering sufficiency of the recommendation. Moreover,

Herz *et al.* is silent with regards to automatically expanding an amount of time used for inferring content preferences and/or generating recommendations by employing at least one supplementary time subinterval when the recommendation is determined to be insufficient as claimed. Therefore, Maissel *et al.* and Herz *et al.*, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest such claimed aspects as agreed upon during the Examiner's interview.

Moreover, for similar reasons and agreed upon with the Examiner, Maissel *et al.* and Herz *et al.*, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest that the collaborative filtering system automatically broadens the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals into at least one additional time subinterval when the recommendation generated from the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals covering the target time period is inadequate as recited in amended independent claim 18. Additionally, based upon similar reasons and agreed upon with the Examiner, Maissel *et al.* and Herz *et al.*, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest means for automatically broadening the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals into at least one additional time subinterval when the recommendation yielded from the particular one of the plurality of time subintervals covering the target time period is inadequate as recited in independent claim 53 as amended.

In view of at least the foregoing, it is readily apparent that Maissel *et al.* and Herz *et al.*, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject invention as recited in independent claims 1, 18, and 53 (as well as claims 2-7, 9-17, and 32-34 which respectively depend there from). This rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP161US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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